

child study

A quarterly journal of parent education

Winter 1951-52

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By-lines

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Happiness Through Mastery (p. 6), adds one more to the numerous contributions STELLA CHESS, M.D., has made to medical and lay publications concerned with children. She is Associate in Psychiatry and Assistant Psychiatrist at Flower and Fifth Avenue Hospitals, a member of the Post-Graduate Psychoanalytic Faculty, New York Medical College, and Co-ordinating Psychiatrist of the Northside Center for Child Development.

Teacher of nursery, elementary and junior high school grades at City and Country School; Assistant professor of Education at New York University, working with graduate and undergraduate students, Faculty member at Bank Street College of Education; Chairman, workshop in elementary school of that college; Faculty member, Vassar Summer Institute: these are the jobs—all current, except the first—of CHARLOTTE B. WINSOR, who writes in this issue of the "middle years" of childhood.

Formerly a teacher in the public schools, director of a camp for young people, and Director of Curriculum at the New School in Evanston, Illinois, JOHN J. BROOKS, PH.D., is now Director of the New Lincoln School. His article in this issue deals with some of the less commonly stressed aspects of adolescence in America.

The cover photograph is by RAE RUSSEL, from Monkmeyer Press Photo Service.

A pledge to be kept

Almost a year has gone by since five thousand American citizens, as broadly representative as any group could be of the nation's population, gathered together at the Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth. Recently the official proceedings of the Conference have been published, which present its Platform, its Pledge to Children, the main addresses and reports on all panels and work groups. A formidable record it is, and one which does honor to the conference participants as much as to those who prepared and managed this tremendous undertaking. But it is not an end product. It is not a record of accomplishment. It is an urgent call to action directed at all the citizens throughout the country!

Nothing can more emphatically underline the urgency of this appeal than a look at the record of a previous conference. At the third White House Conference in 1930, the main recommendations were gathered together in a document, the Children's Charter, which represented "the aims toward which the Conference hopes to lead public thought and action for the children of the country." Rereading this document today reveals shockingly how far we have failed, during the intervening two decades, to translate the Children's Charter of 1930 into appropriate action, and to what extent, therefore, we had to restate in 1950 the basic program for action formulated in 1930.

Far more than a change of words was involved when the Midcentury White House Conference chose to issue a Pledge to Children rather than a Children's Charter: it represents a formal and definite promissory note issued to America's youth. This is not a task which can be left to Government or to a few large national organizations. Nor is this a job for the experts alone. Only through citizen action, individually as well as collectively, can we hope to redeem this pledge.

The Conference Platform and the Pledge to Children provide us with a well charted course for community action. The National Midcentury Committee for Children and Youth, under Leonard Mayo's leadership, and the many statewide committees are ready to offer assistance on following up the findings and recommendations. But the final test rests with the citizen.

In a decade we shall be asked for an accounting on our use of this Midcentury Conference on Children and Youth. Let us not be found wanting.

GUNNAR DYBWAD

There is no one way

The more knowledge, the fewer generalizations:
perhaps this is the only reliable
rule—even when dealing with babies

The more one studies babies the more puzzling they become. We are beginning to feel the need to examine much more closely laws of development of which we were sure only a few years—even a few months—ago. Now one hesitates to give advice which would have been *the* only advice a short time ago, for it is becoming clear that some blunders were made when the adviser felt safest.

It seems to us that the source of this growing bewilderment is two-fold. First the baby (by that we mean the child in his first eighteen months) is an extremely bewildering being to adults. It resembles us in origin and appearance and is nevertheless ununderstandable, untraceable, unpredictable. The infant's unpredictability goes much further than that of any moody adult, or even of a three-year-old. Although frequently we do not know what people will do in an intricate situation, we are sure of more things about our neighbor than we realize. We know with a reasonable amount of certainty that he is sad if he weeps, pleased when he smiles. We are pretty sure that he is in a hurry when he runs, has time on his hands if he takes it easy, and has some reason for starting to walk, and for stopping. There are things we know with even greater certitude. If, as he sits at a meal, his hand approaches a fork, he will grasp it. The bit of food on the

tip of his fork will end in his mouth and eventually in his stomach. Generally speaking, we understand a number of an adult's actions and expressions, and we can frequently foresee the aim of his movements.

This is not true of the infant. The newborn's smile may occur as the result of many different kinds of stimulation. Neither the pediatrician, nor the baby nurse, nor even the best of mothers can always tell why a child cries. It takes the baby many months to develop something that resembles our laughter. The speed of a child's actions remains independent of the world's big time-regulating clock for a long period. And even the infant's movements are surprising. The little hand may go out toward an object and suddenly deviate in its course, taking a new turn as incomprehensible to the adult mind as it was unexpected to the eye.

The following article, however, will not deal with the upsetting surprises provided by the differences between child and adult as such, but with the other reason for a new, more tentative approach in our study of children. The work in child psychology which began at the end of the last century, and reached a peak in the work of Arnold Gesell and his collaborators, succeeded in showing certain laws of development, such as steps and stages through

which any healthy human being has to pass. The application of these studies has given us invaluable pointers for child care. It has taught us the basic rules for dealing with children at certain age levels. We should not forget, however, that these rules represent a frame of reference rather than specific recipes for a specific case. They are based on the study of the "average child." In our clinical practice the "average child" does not exist. It is a scientific abstraction necessary for its purpose, but dangerous without modification.

H. Hartmann has justifiably questioned an Austrian poet's remark that there are "many illnesses but only one health," pointing out that there are at least as many healths as illnesses. We believe that it should be the aim of the future developmental psychology to find the variations within the norm, to see by what different ways normal, productive adulthood can be reached. This kind of study will contribute to the understanding of why we become the individuals we are, how personality is formed. Child psychology has still a long way to go in answering these questions. This paper will only try to illustrate by a few examples the effect on child care and child guidance of a clear recognition of the child's—and the parent's—individuality. There is no *one* correct way to handle problems.

What is "correct" advice?

First let us consider a few examples of how a mother's personality may influence us in counseling her and even may force us to abstain from advice which would generally be considered absolutely correct. The second part will try to show how early individuality can set in, and that it takes open eyes both on the part of the pediatrician or psychologist, and on the part of the mother, to deal adequately with any baby.

The professional attitude toward breastfeeding has had an eventful history during the last few years. After having been rejected as "old-fashioned and obsolete," it has been praised as the safeguard and guarantee for healthy development, almost including a certificate for college entry and a marriage license. Although we do still believe in the great value of breastfeed-

ing, this all-or-nothing attitude, mainly through the work of Milton Senn and a few others, has now given place to an attitude that respects the psychological structure and the wishes of the mother. By now a considerable, although still too small, number of pediatricians refrain from forcing a mother to breastfeed, even if she seems physically quite fit to do so.

The consideration of the mother's feelings towards breastfeeding is not quite as easy as it sounds, however. Fortunately there are some women who always have intended to breastfeed their children and who do it successfully when their babies are born. Possibly fortunately, there are also those who are perfectly sure that they will not breastfeed their children and who stick to this opinion in spite of modern child-care's teaching that breastfeeding is healthier than bottle feeding for physiological, psychological and time-economical reasons. But there are quite a number of others in still a third category. They plan to breastfeed their children, but as soon as the child's mouth touches the nipple, they experience difficulties and have the feeling that they cannot go through with it. Here the problem for the professional adviser sets in.

It would be easy if one could find one working formula for those cases, either deciding that any mother who had planned to breastfeed should do so, or arguing that any woman who experiences difficulties in breastfeeding harms herself and the child in trying to do it. The two following cases will illustrate how futile it would be to try to find such a formula.

Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Smith each had a first child, a daughter. Both were very young—under 21—and had repeatedly spoken of their wish to breastfeed. Both had had their babies in a clinic which favors breastfeeding and tries to help the mothers to do so successfully. But each had great difficulty with the first breastfeeding of her child.

The difference could only be found in the way they expressed their difficulties. Mrs. Jones suddenly formed a number of intellectual reasons against breastfeeding. Although these could, with some difficulty, be refuted, she forgot about the instructions which one nurse gave her and had to be told all over again by the

next one how to proceed. Even then, she did not follow the nurse's advice on how to handle the child, although she made a visible effort to please her advisers. As a result her contact with her baby was clumsy and strained. No overt emotion was visible, neither disgust nor disappointment at not being able to breastfeed was expressed.

Mrs. Smith was dissolved in tears after her first breastfeeding. With the expression of a little girl whose first doll with a "real porcelain head and real eyelashes" has been broken, she insisted that breastfeeding was "unbearably painful, much worse than the pains at delivery."

Many factors are involved

One of these mothers could be helped to breastfeed and should have been helped. One could not. On second thought it seems clear that it was Mrs. Smith who could breastfeed her child, whereas Mrs. Jones was incapable of doing so. Mrs. Smith's desire to breastfeed her child was shaken by an unpleasant experience of pain, but hers was a conscious disappointment to which she reacted with appropriate emotions. The nurses' and doctors' efforts to reduce the painful aspect of the experience helped her to carry out her desire to do the best possible thing for her child. Mrs. Jones, on the other hand, had built up such strong defenses against her difficulty, that she could not change. Neither her body nor her psyche lent itself to breastfeeding. In her case, trying to make her do so would have meant jeopardizing her relations to the child by making her turn against it.

Some of us, without real scientific verification, believe that six months is the correct age for weaning. We think that the younger child whose only object of interest and love is the mother would lose too much by being taken away from the breast; whereas the transfer of interest to the inanimate object which takes place after the first half year should make it easier to accept the bottle at that time. We also believe that if one waits to wean until the baby is seven or eight months of age, one may run into some difficulty, as this stage represents a new developmental crisis. The fact that the

child around this age recognizes the mother as an individual and reacts negatively to strangers heightens the amount of anxiety produced during this stage and may make the infant more sensitive to the traumatic experience of weaning. The following examples will show, however, that one should not be too rigid in applying this theory.

A professional woman wished to breastfeed her child. During the feeding, she spoke not a word about the child and her contact with him but about endless small and large problems of a professional nature. She was worn out and the advice to give up breastfeeding was certainly justified, although this change may not have come at the most propitious time. One could argue that instead of risking weaning at the wrong moment, one should have persuaded this mother not to breastfeed at all. But we personally believe that our knowledge about "the correct age" for weaning is much too shaky to justify our depriving a mother of the privilege of giving her own milk to her child, or the child of this contact with his mother's body.

Another mother continued to breastfeed her child although the little girl was over six months old. The child definitely enjoyed and needed sucking. Any attempt to make this mother shift from breast to bottle was met with many arguments—that two weaning processes were too much for a child, that she would willingly shift to the cup, but not to the bottle. Again we met with some resistance in this mother when we suggested giving toys to the child. On closer study, we found that this mother had extreme resistance against sharing the child with anybody, or even with an inanimate object: she had to be the child's only object of satisfaction. It seemed impossible to win this war as a two-front battle. We also realized that the child did get much pleasant experience in the process of breastfeeding. So we concentrated on persuading the mother to give the child a few things to play with and let the mother herself decide when to wean the baby. This she did when her milk became scarce, around the baby's ninth month.

One could add many more to these exam-

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Happiness through mastery

Confidence comes to the small
child if what he has to offer,
in his own way, is considered valuable

By Stella Chess

In this age of weighing and measuring, there is a tendency to reduce human growth to rules and formulæ. Fortunately children do not permit themselves to be fitted into a precision approach with ease. After the infant feeding formula has been computed to precise measurements, and made up with exactitude, the infant cheerfully rejects half, or demands more, and suits his own individual needs rather than the prescription. Similarly, in considering the common problems met from approximately two to six years of age it must be borne in mind that while we speak in specific terms, as applied to any individual child these are approximations, mere points of reference, and not measuring rods for exact application.

The aims of parenthood have always varied in terms of social standards and the prestige aims of the culture. The standards of toilet training in our present day have more to do with the cost of diaper service and the nuisance of washing diapers and rugs than with any biological or basically psychological necessities on the part of the infant. Similarly, the very active child creates a problem in our urban cliff dwellings where this same capacity for output of energy would be a considerable asset in a nomadic society. The general desire of parents is to create individuals who will show early evidence of the qualities most highly valued in the particular culture, and develop these qualities if possible to a greater degree than average.

There may be added individual strivings. A parent who had been deprived of opportunities for certain accomplishments may pressure his children in the direction of his own desire. There may be individual family traditions of trade or profession. These individual family standards are usually in tune with the general social mores, rather than against the tide.

Time and the changes it brings in social ideals also influence parents' goals for their children. There has been considerable shifting in the responsibilities parents have assumed toward their children. In the Victorian age, the accepted norm was the obedient child and the directing parent. The present emphasis also is on parent-child relationship, but the child's desires and needs are now more apt to be the focal point. Other aims have not been dropped, but the general attitude is often expressed by mothers who say, "I don't want him to be smart, I just want him to be happy." The emphasis is upon the child's assertiveness, upon free expression of desires, or upon the absence of signs of tension, such as bed wetting, nail biting, thumb sucking, excessive sibling rivalry or dependency. The "ideal" child is the outgoing, vivacious youngster with many friends, who knows what he wants to do and can make his desires clear.

This ideal is, of course, a good one but somewhat stereotyped. It describes only one type of happy child. The difficulty lies in the

task set, that of creating a child who is happy in his own terms. A happy child is actually one who has mastered, within the limits of his age, physical type, and personality tendencies the world around him. Behavior difficulties and common childhood problems are either incidents in the course of mastering new accomplishments and concepts, or are failures in achieving mastery. Just as adequate mastery has happiness as a by-product, so inadequate mastery has dissatisfaction and unhappiness as its by-product.

Deceptive appearances

For example, assertiveness can be determined best by examining the essence of the relationship rather than by superficial appearance of liveliness and alertness. The truly assertive child is one who can find his place in child society without either letting himself be pushed around or feeling the necessity always to be on the lookout for possible incursion into his rights. In these terms, the assertive child may be boisterous and physically active or quiet and contemplative or any number of other personality types.

Some children master situations by jumping into the middle and working out their place through positive interactions, while others may prefer to watch and think first. An unassertive, maladjusted child also may jump into the midst of a situation or be the cautious personality type. The determinant of whether this is assertion or aggression is to be found in the result obtained. The child can successfully obtain good relationships only through a pathway naturally his.

Similarly, a child who is unhappy and insecure or maladjusted will express his difficulties through pathways that are natural to him. The active child in his unhappiness becomes hyperactive and destructively aggressive. The quiet, and potentially contemplative child may tend to withdraw, become unduly sensitive and isolate himself. In general, the child brings into play certain intrinsic qualities which he uses in his mastery of the world around. He will gain confidence in people, and in attempting new experiences, from his past efforts at mastery, if these have been successful. His reactions will

be to the attitudes expressed to him and most particularly in terms of whether what he has to offer is considered valuable or something to be discarded.

If the attitudes around him seem to add up to the opinion that he is worth very little, he must either retreat from his effort to find adult approval or keep trying with the constant expectation of failure. If he chooses the first course—i.e. gives up the attempt to please—he then settles into an aggravation of the behavior disapproved of, a caricature of his normal personality type.

A distinction must be made between problems which are part of growing up and problems which indicate real conflict. In order to make such an evaluation, the child's individual personality and approach to mastery must be taken into consideration.

A two-year-old child has accomplished a remarkable degree of mastery of his environment. From a human organism completely dependent upon others for his continued existence, the average two-year-old has mastered the basic principles of speech, walking, human relationships, and general exploration of his environment. He is usually busy experimenting in all these areas in a very active fashion. The outward form of this experimentation may vary widely from child to child both in terms of the child's personality type and activity needs, and the attitudes expressed toward him. Equally normal behavior may be delightful in one child and extremely difficult to manage in another.

Conflict or experiment?

Bobby, at two years and three months, is considered a delightful child. In his active pursuit of speech, he echoes everything he hears, imbuing it with a comical twist. Walking downstairs ends always with a playful jump, there are frequent hugs and kisses which invariably cause the adult present to feel very important. He is alert and only occasionally shy. His infrequent tantrums are of short duration and he can be induced to engage happily in a substitute activity when he has had his cry out. He obviously is not a problem.

Bruce, at the same age, seems to his parents

to be developing into a problem. An early walker, he has been in constant motion since ten and a half months of age. Restrictions of motion make him frantic, and use of a playpen is impossible. Speech, on the other hand, has only recently been more than fragmentary, and tantrums, when he cannot make his desires understood, are prolonged and fatiguing to all.

Walking downstairs is done at breakneck speed, the hazards of street crossings are unheeded. He is too engrossed in doing things to explore personal relationships, and pushes off affectionate demonstration in favor of rough-house play. He is extremely wearing to live with, yet seems a happy child except when physically restricted by the needs of the neighbors and the limitations of a three-room city apartment. This child is not a problem either, though his management is, and will continue to be, for several more years. In this case, management consists of juggling the legitimate needs of the child and the neighbors and trying to remember even at the most harassed moments that it is not the child's fault that such unnatural conditions have been placed upon him. It may help to remember, too, that with maturation the child's interests may turn toward activities that make less noise. Also, he will need less supervision and will be able to let off steam outdoors on his own.

The frequent "normal" problems met at two or three have to do with the exploration of motion, speech, and personal relationships. No longer engrossed with the mechanics of basic balance, the child wishes to explore the possibilities of further mastery of movement. No longer focusing on the matching of a word to an object, the child is now interested in projecting his ideas and desires through words. Since the youngster has not had many experiences, the possibilities are not very great, and the use of repetition easily builds into fixed rituals.

Marian at four years can frequently be extremely irritating. Although capable of considerable independent behavior, she is also capable of turning simple routines into distressing situations. One morning she will suddenly announce rules for her mother's behavior. She greets mother with a torrent of tears: she should have entered her room with baby steps. Mother must put on Marian's shoes today. Another torrent of tears brings forth the pronouncement that she wanted the right shoe put on first. Mother attempts to carry out these dictums until they become too complicated, hoping to avert the inevitable storm, but reaches the point where she feels herself becoming a lackey and rebels. Mother thinks ruefully of cousin Sue who never makes such issues. Then

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Theatre Benefit

A unique experience

An unusual Christmas gift

The Child Study Association of America, which has always depended on private support to help carry on its program, has been exceptionally fortunate this year in securing for its annual benefit two consecutive performances of Sir Laurence and Lady Olivier in

Caesar and Cleopatra, by George Bernard Shaw, Wednesday, January 30.
Antony and Cleopatra, by William Shakespeare, Thursday, January 31.

Tickets are priced at \$25, \$20 and \$15 in the Orchestra; \$20 and \$15 in the Mezzanine. For further information on these performances, write or telephone the Benefit Committee at 132 East 74th Street, New York 21, N. Y., BUTterfield 8-6000.

The difference between our benefit prices and box office prices is tax deductible. Your contribution will help the work of the Association which, through its research, counseling, education and other services is reaching parents all over this country and the world.

Outward bound

Children in the "middle years"

seem to be moving away from adults,
but still need boundary lines to guide them

Childhood is a time of growing and becoming. Growth has a pattern: each age has its particular needs and accomplishments, its own style and focus. Yet within the broad band of any age level each growing child has his own tempo, his own drives and capacities, his own awareness of relationships.

It is our purpose to discuss here one phase of child growth, namely the "middle years," so-called for lack of a better nomenclature. These years from six to twelve are a time when the child is moving out from the family yet they are also a time of deep dependence on home support, both in personal development and in building goals and values. From this time on, as never before, the parents must not only accept, but even value, the tentative moves the child is making toward adult achievement. This they must do even when his behavior is crude, or when he seems to be bringing home unwelcome patterns from the larger world in which he is now living. The home must support his experiences and adventures with the reassurance of love and admiration.

These middle years are also the time in our culture when the child, willingly or not, goes to school. Here strangers take over the task of helping him to learn the ways of our life, the skills and techniques for getting along in our society, the ways of building and living in a world of his peers, apart from the world of home.

If it is ever valid to think of certain areas of development as belonging to certain years

of childhood, one might say that these middle years are the time when the child is working on the problems of his own competence, his relationships with his peers and his eventual severance from home. Nor are these problems isolated from each other. Like the sides of a triangle each has a direction but the figure is only complete when all connect. Thus we see a child struggling to achieve competence in order to count in his own group of peers, which now begins to supercede the family as the major place for belonging.

What are the child's tools and techniques as he enters this era of his life? How far can we expect him to develop by the time he leaves these middle years of childhood and the elementary school? How ready will he be for the next scene in his growth drama, namely, adolescence and high school?

In these years the child becomes fairly competent, practicing for perfection in the use of his muscles, deriving satisfactions from achievements in sports, or reading, school studies or other activities. He uses his new skill for manifold satisfactions, intellectual as well as social and physical. He begins to function independently in this world of written symbols.

After he has mastered its tools he tries to use them to find answers—through reading as well as through first-hand experience—to the many questions his expanding world presents. He wants to grasp the facts of his physical world, and the relationships between them, as well as the basic causes of these relationships. He is not

only acquiring the tools for competence in our literate society, but also some cultural background in common with other members of his age group. Stated more simply, the boy knows the batting averages of the current baseball heroes and the girl the latest romances of favorite movie stars. Boys and girls are becoming aware not only of our life here and now but of things that happened long ago and far away, of cultural roots, of common allusions, folk lore and many of the other elements that have gone into the making of our civilization.

The teachable moment

If we could but achieve a perfect timing and catch each child at his peak of readiness and then provide the appropriate experience from which his learning is to proceed, educating the child would be a delightful, simple task. Havighurst makes a good formulation of the problems of learning when he says . . . "Development tasks may arise from physical maturation, from the pressure of cultural processes upon the individual, from the desires, aspirations and values of the emerging personality, and they arise in most cases from combinations of these factors acting together. . . . When the body is ripe, and society requires, and the self is ready to achieve a certain task, the teachable moment has come. Efforts at teaching, which would have been largely wasted if they had come earlier, give gratifying results when they come at the teachable moment, when the task should be learned."*

Since children do not grow as isolated organisms, the factor of group needs presents a further complexity. We accept the group nowadays, not as a necessary evil, but as the most vital growth force available to the individual. There is, therefore, a continual attempt to strike a balance between individual readiness and what the group demands. The individual must achieve competence within the structure of his group, and it is the group which serves as his measure of success or failure. Children have their own value scale of competence. A skillful body, for instance, may rate higher with them than a brilliant mind.

Let two seven-year-olds tell their own

stories. One, having some trouble in learning to read, memorizes the story and says to his mother, "The dumb clucks in my class need books when they want to read; I don't." The other, the bespectacled "genius" whose reading prowess has been played down says, "You know what my teacher is doing? She's trying to dumb me up so I'll match the other kids. Maybe that's not such a bad idea, huh?" Both boys are turning to home—mother—to tie up the wounds inflicted by the group in this realm of competence or rather acceptance of one's competence. It seems to matter little whether the child is outside the group at one end of the gamut or the other. To be in—that's what counts.

Besides physical and intellectual capacities, the child brings to these years primitive but serviceable social techniques. He needs companionship for play and often makes his way into groups as a contributor of things ("I'll let you play with my trains"), or by taking roles ("I'll be the baby") or by prowess and skill.

The group's the thing

The formations of group life are fluid. Best friends come later and serve the more profound purposes of sharing the sorrows and injustices inflicted on ten-year-olds by parents and teachers, and as partners in sorties into grown-up undertakings. Usually by twelve, a girl need a best friend for the unending telephone repetitions of all that happened during the day or for a shopping venture without benefit of adults. Boys need partners in repairing bikes or running a business, or going off to a game—again without adult companionship.

How much energy children invest in making the grade with their group! For girls the manifestations are often to be found in clothes, hairdos and, by the time they are twelve, make-up. In one group, five sets of long-cherished pigtails disappeared within one week and identical hairdos—page-boy was stylish that year—crowned the heads of these ten-year-olds. A fastidious nine-year-old, having begged new saddle shoes from a somewhat reluctant parent, was seen to rub the back yard mud into their pristine whiteness before she could comfortably wear them to school.

**Development Tasks*, by Robert S. Havighurst.

Boys tend to group around interests and "clubs" for making and doing things. Girl-hating and a longing for high adventure flourish. Girls tend to form cliques and have crushes. These are good years for belonging to community organizations which meet the interests and needs of youngsters, rather than aiming to educate or direct them.

Although in their social groupings boys as well as girls of this age usually exclude the opposite sex, nevertheless many children of older middle years begin to experiment with heterosexual interests. Sometimes with the suddenness of a thunderclap, a ten or eleven-year-old girl shows this kind of social maturity. One eleven-year-old announced, "This year, I'm having just *five couples* at my birthday party. And don't tell me to ask the rest of the class. They're just kids." Even if such a party should turn out to be a grim failure in her parents' eyes, the little girl has made a move toward the next stage of development—toward adolescence.

Broader horizons

In these middle years of childhood, too, we see children groping toward broader social understanding and action, beyond mere personal-social acceptance and success. At six the child may simply use our social trappings for his play—a parade or a strike is a fine game and never mind what for. At nine or ten, however, he is apt to reflect, in his talk and his interests, (sometimes to our dismay) the climate in which his social values have been learned. Thus a very mannerly nine-year-old, nominating a classmate to be chairman of the class, made the following speech: "I choose Jim because he's been in this school a long time and knows lots of things. He does lots of wrong things but he apologizes so nicely you don't mind them . . . even though you know he sometimes doesn't mean it when he apologizes."

By the end of these middle years, children are apt to express an interest in problems of the whole wide world, and find it hard to "wait till you're old enough" to participate in their solution. They are often vociferous protagonists of causes, albeit somewhat hazy about their own part in the social processes these

causes represent. At six children may fight out a presidential election with campaign buttons but only the most mature among them are consistent enough to stick to a candidate if the rival buttons are more alluring. By twelve these same children are still unsure of all the facts but they are aware of issues, take sides violently (usually reflecting parental viewpoints) and wish they might really participate in the fray. "Aw, what's the use, we can't even really vote," says a youngster after a campaign hotly contested in the classroom.

Comfort without confinement

Perhaps the most difficult and subtle accomplishment of these years is the beginning of severance from the adult world and the establishment of a child's basic independence in his own sphere. Children and adults now have to build a relationship in which there is comfort without confinement for the child, a belonging together without possessiveness on the part of the adults—teachers as well as parents.

The child seems to be making all his moves *away* from adults. The seven-year-old with a "Keep Out" sign on his bedroom door, the ten-year-old who somewhat belligerently says to the kindly inquiries of his teacher, "You don't have to know everything about us, do you?", and the twelve-year-old who complains bitterly, "My parents are so understanding, I have nothing to rebel against," are all imploring us to allow them elbow room, growing space. What they cannot ask for, because they are not even aware that they want or need it, is a limitation or a boundary. In these years, the child is still unable to manage limitless freedom. Boys and girls are asking a vote of confidence from us, but also a structure within which they can operate comfortably.

That "Keep Out" sign does not necessarily mean there is mischief brewing behind it. Perhaps there is only the desire for privacy that adults understand so well for themselves. Because these ten-year-olds organize clubs and meet in the less reputable spots in the neighborhood, we need not infer that they are on the road to juvenile delinquency: they may be seeking some spirited adventure which our highly

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Universal human problems: adolescent phase

Type-casting young people as "adolescents,
U.S. variety" lessens our
chances of fruitful contact with them

The adolescent in America, to a large extent, is an assembly-line product, on which every effort has been made to stamp the middle-class standards and folkways peculiar to our society. Western civilization and human biology, in an oftentimes unholy alliance, are responsible for many of the problems faced by our young people. Both of these formidable factors seem to be here to stay; but there is much that adults can do that is helpful in guiding young people toward good adjustments both to their culture and to their "innards." Since the adult with a clear idea of our social framework, and his own role in it, is the one most fitted to perform his task as a counselor for youth, the purpose of this discussion will be to examine that framework and the actual situations which it creates for young people.

It is unnecessary here to do more than list such problems. Literally hundreds of books and pamphlets have been written on the subject. The very weight of all these ponderings hangs heavy, heavy over the heads of parents and teachers and serves to lend further emphasis to a period of growth which is already unnaturally stressed in our society. Despite the variations in nomenclature, the many lists of adolescent problems could be reduced to the following areas:

- (1) Relationships with others and one's self;
- (2) Gaining security, status, love;

- (3) Adjusting to home, school, other groups;
- (4) Adjusting to physical maturations;
- (5) Developing satisfying values, standards, goals;
- (6) Resolving conflicting cultural situations;
- (7) Working, spending, achieving independence;
- (8) Planning the future;
- (9) Sex, courtship, marriage.

Obviously, most of these items are subheads under the first one. Just as obviously, they are all interrelated and overlapping. Not so apparent, perhaps, is the fact that these are essentially universal *human* problems, and that adolescence is simply one period of growth in which certain aspects of these problems are pressing and important to young people. Thus, as parents and teachers, we must, somehow, peer around our own insecurities and fears to view helpfully the similar problems facing young people.

There are four points upon which we might touch in seeking the understanding needed to perform our task more effectively.

- (1) The universality of human problems;
- (2) The particular emphases which our society gives to these problems when faced by adolescents;
- (3) The influence upon ourselves, our schools, our standards and our goals of *one* segment of our population;

- (4) The need for a clearer concept of our role in the adult-adolescent relationship.

Adult stereotypes

We have said that the problems in our list are not innately a part of the occupational hazards of being an adolescent. To a large extent the stereotyped concepts of adolescence are creations of our culture. If we are to be helpful adults, we must first stop ourselves from projecting adult standards and mature patterns upon young people. For example:

An adult stereotype of youth is adolescent awkwardness. Yet the clumsiness of young people is usually most apparent when they are placed in adult situations. Your sixteen-year-old son moves about the basketball floor with ballet grace. Your daughter can complete with casual competence a jitterbug routine whose complexity would leave you and me lying on the floor. Adults, too, are awkward, never more so than when they are attempting to act in an adolescent situation. Certainly, young people *do* behave awkwardly in some situations, but we must understand that in many instances it is our social codes that makes these areas difficult for them, not the supposedly innate ineptness of youth.

We have stereotypes, too, about the laziness of the adolescent. Physical factors may of course enter in, and these may be particularly associated with growth processes. Yet the youth who works furiously for ten or twelve hours on some project in the garage and then sprawls relaxedly upon his unmade bed amid the clutter of his room, is not too different from the father who returns late from his shop and lounges around his home distributing his cigar ashes and the evening paper throughout the house.

The fears, insecurities, and fumbings of youth in meeting situations involving the opposite sex have long been the butt of adult laughter. Plays, books, and ageless jokes are based on them. But of how many adults is it true that they meet their problems of sex, courtship, and marriage with unfailing competence?

Our entire culture seems to be in conspiracy to make life as difficult as possible for young people in their relation to the opposite sex. Annually we change our minds about which por-

tions of the female anatomy shall be concealed or revealed. Vast cosmetic campaigns help mothers to drill their daughters in the techniques of tease and capture, but these activities must be carried on by sets of rules that vary with time and place. We consider, for instance, that a boy may embrace a girl with complete propriety, no matter how possessive his grip, provided he presents the illusion of listening to dance music. Five seconds after the music stops, this act becomes indecent.

The position of a young person in our society dealing with economic situations is unclear, too. In older cultures, a child born into a certain group will almost automatically find his school and social life set among people with similar standards. In America, the behavior patterns of the home, the school, and the social circle in which young people move may differ radically, and each of these may be in conflict with the others. Our children often face the problems of dressing like others, doing what others of their age do, earning and spending like their peers, while simultaneously trying to conform to totally different standards in the home.

Apparently, then, the role of the adolescent in America is typecasting of the worst kind. The character, lines, and business are all predetermined for him by generations of adult authors bent on projecting their own concepts onto the youthful actors—and being none too consistent in their demands, either. Indeed, it seems that in our society young people can solve most of their problems only by growing up!

Middle class patterns and pressures

In addition to coping with adult standards and confusing social codes, many of the young people in America face a problem which has been too little studied and analyzed.

The accidents of history and the nature of our school system have resulted in an educational process which is largely characterized by middle-class objectives and middle-class behavior patterns. By and large, our teachers are drawn from a fairly homogeneous middle-class group. As our culture and our population become increasingly complex, we must constantly remind ourselves that the values we teach, the information we present, and the behavior we

demand reflect only one segment of our great American people.

New values in our culture

There would be a mighty burning of the books in the marketplace and a new flurry of senatorial investigations if our history texts should suddenly cease to be focussed on the New England tradition. Despite the variations between Northern and Southern history texts, and despite the modifications brought about by local censorships, most of our history books are centered on our white pioneering fathers and their westering caravans. Young children, as they derive their values and standards from the past, follow these westering caravans with their New England household goods and gods to Illinois or Idaho, where they arrived with their cargo of tradition relatively intact and good for generations of use.

Unquestionably the New England background and the westward movement are splendid and unique chapters in history. The Anglo-American, white, Protestant middle-class tradition has played an enormously important role and has perhaps thus far represented the major cultural heritage of the country. But times are changing rapidly. How strange this tradition must appear to thousands of Mexican youth, for example, to Negro children and to great numbers of one-generation immigrants to America, whose historical roots are very different! Our schools and our other social institutions, our teachers and our counselors, make little provision for the variations among many millions of Americans and the differences in our social or cultural groups.

In a number of New York City classrooms today, English-speaking teachers are struggling with overcrowded classes of Spanish-speaking children. To these children, the language and the actions of their teachers are meaningless gibberish and antic behavior. Everywhere throughout the country equally unhappy situations exist where middle-class adults are striving to guide the behavior of children from depressed or "foreign" groups whose values, behavior patterns, and goal-seeking are very different from their teachers'.

The vast majority of teachers are kind and hardworking people who love children of all

backgrounds. But they need more than this. They need to go beyond kindness and try to understand our total culture, and to be keenly aware of their own biases of class, custom and age, wherever these exist. They must seek to identify themselves with children whose backgrounds, values, and behavior patterns are not necessarily inferior, merely different from those of the counseling adult.

Self-evaluation

It is impossible in this space to give an analysis of the values, standards, and behavior patterns of middle-class America. First, there is wide variation within this class. Secondly, there is a degree of vertical mobility which makes it hard to draw arbitrary lines between classes.

We can, of course, consult Kinsey, cultural anthropologists, and the evidence of our own observation. Most important of all, we must, somehow, develop a continuous habit of self-evaluation. Why do we believe this or that? Where did this value come from? Is there an intrinsic moral content in a certain behavior pattern *we* have that is different from that of Pasquale's or that undernourished-looking boy from the slum clearance area? Is everything about the American tradition as revealed by school curricula inviolate? Obviously, there have been important changes in "the American way" during the past seventy-five years: attitudes toward slavery, woman's role, and labor, to cite a few. Does it not follow that school curricula and we, as individuals, should be constantly open to examination, revision, adjustment?

What are the techniques?

There are some immediate techniques which can be helpful here. Teachers should be given the time and the incentive to dust off the cumulative folders in the principal's office and to study them, not only for new insights into the individual, but also to acquire a feeling for the wide variation in backgrounds of their students. Home visits can be enormously helpful, particularly when the teacher approaches the home with all prejudices and preconceptions well reined and with a sincere determination to develop a higher degree of empathy.

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From a counselor's notebook

The roots of family conflicts
can be successfully explored, as
in this case of a three-generation tangle

In a time like the present, packed with conflicting counsel on child rearing, we can hardly wonder that mothers are often in doubt about how to go ahead and help their children grow up. "Do I dare to 'frustrate' my child?" they ask themselves. "What dire consequences will result if I do?" And in their hesitancy, they often let the moment pass when they might have helped a youngster take a new step forward.

Mrs. S. was such a mother. She was young, alert, deeply interested in her first-born—a two-year-old little boy, but she was in a state of complete confusion when she sought advice. Mrs. S.'s mother, in no uncertain terms, had expressed her view that Danny should be toilet trained without delay. Her daughter, she felt, was neglecting her duty in taking the matter so lightly. Mrs. S. didn't agree and was giving battle under the shield of Dr. Spock. "Dr. Spock says if you just let children alone, they'll train themselves," she declared—though in a moment or so she admitted that perhaps this wasn't *quite* what Dr. Spock had said.

Obviously the toilet-training issue was a hot one between mother and daughter and, meanwhile, the child continued to urinate at will, sometimes in a corner of the living room, darting under a table to elude the half-hearted attempts of his mother to prevent him.

Another issue between Mrs. S. and her mother was the matter of eating. Her mother felt that Danny should learn "to eat everything." She, on the other hand, had followed

a less rigid policy; she served a variety of foods but allowed freedom of choice and, as Danny was gradually widening his range, mealtime was a pleasant occasion.

In all these disputes, was she right or was her mother right? She came to the Counseling Service for a direct answer to this question. Yet it was clear to the counselor that she would have to face many different questions before she could come to a satisfactory solution. How much truth was there on each side? Was she blindly opposing her mother because she was basically over-dependent on her judgments? If so, why?

Since Mrs. S. seemed deeply involved with Dr. Spock's educational principles, the counselor began by discussing with Mrs. S. her general views on rearing children, and from there how she applied her views to the management of Danny. How much control and direction did she believe he needed? What part had she and her husband to play in his development? How did she apply a "never frustrate" policy? Did she follow it wherever possible? Or did she find that some other policy worked better?

Mrs. S. said she inclined to the view that children need some direction. Actually she got Danny to bed at a reasonable hour in the evening and had managed to cut short his tendency to run out to the living room again. This certainly did involve opposing her will to his; it was, she admitted, a form of "frustration." Yet she felt it necessary, had been gentle

in her approach and bedtime routines on the whole ran smoothly. As for his eating, she didn't force him to eat foods he disliked, yet within a framework of flexibility she left no doubt in his mind that mealtime was for eating. The counselor commented that all this sounded very sensible. Would she think of meeting the toilet-training problem the same way?

Insecurity appears

Here it was obvious that Mrs. S. immediately felt insecure. She wanted to be told just what to do. Toward her mother's advice she had been full of resentment; yet now she demanded to know whether the counselor would "guarantee" that if she gave Danny toilet training, he would weather the ordeal and remain "emotionally undamaged." This anxious demand for guarantees clearly reflected her lack of confidence in her own judgement, and was also designed to tempt the counselor into becoming just as dominating as her mother. So the counselor gave her some simple support here by commenting briefly that where human beings are concerned, no guarantees are ever possible—we just have to do the best we can with what knowledge we have. Clearly this particular problem had special meaning for Mrs. S. and aroused conflicts within her which other phases of Danny's development did not.

Training begins

Yet, very soon, and quite without directives from the counselor, Mrs. S. did begin to give Danny some training for the toilet. She took him to the bathroom at specified times—on waking, before going out, after he came home, after his nap, before bedtime. The counselor listened, nodded occasionally, added an additional suggestion or so along the lines of Mrs. S.'s own thinking and agreed with her that when Danny wet the living room he should be told quite seriously that this was not the place for it. She might then take him to the bathroom promptly, the counselor added. She also cautioned her that a child shouldn't be expected to learn all at once and that patience and gentleness were required. With this kind of easy-going support, Mrs. S. proved surprising-

ly well able to go ahead, and the child began to accept the toilet rather quickly. Throughout all the interviews that followed, the counselor in this way kept track of progress.

At the same time that simple steps toward training were going on, Mrs. S. began to reveal some of the reasons for her extreme sensitiveness to her mother's opinions. In this way she began to see the relation of her own childhood problems to Danny's difficulties. Fortunately, Mrs. S. had a vivid memory of the way her parents had handled her as a child, and it wasn't long before she began to see how important a part old childhood grievances were playing in her handling of Danny today. Her father, whose special favorite she had been, died when she was seven years old. A brother, two years younger, though the apple of his mother's eye, had proved disappointing. He was physically undersized, frail, mentally duller than his sister. All through their childhood, Mrs. S. felt that her brother was far more important to her mother than she was and that she was somehow wronging both her mother and her brother when she made friends easily, brought home good report cards, or attracted favorable comments. As a result, her feelings toward her brother were still a mixture of jealousy, on the one hand, because her mother had loved him more, and on the other, an anxious solicitude designed to atone for the jealousy.

As she described her brother to the counselor, there was a note of contempt in her voice; yet she was almost frantically eager to see him get a certain job which he felt would be a step toward self-respect and a satisfactory life. "He must-must-must get that job," she would say passionately. "I feel that if I just *will* it enough, it *must* happen."

Marriage and the family

She had married in spite of her mother's lack of enthusiasm for her choice, realizing that with her brother unmarried and unsettled her mother was bound to resent her marrying at all. She went ahead in spite of her own feeling that for her to find married happiness would be a new affront to her brother. She had overcome successfully her own sense of guilt about

this and also her mother's resistance. Her marriage had turned out well; she was happy. She was especially happy when as soon as she was married, both her mother and her brother became violently absorbed in the prospect of her having a child. When they learned there was one on the way, they were rapturously excited. Now for the first time, she felt she was in their good graces. They were thoroughly pleased with her. And of course, it *must* be a boy!

It was a boy; a healthy, clever, altogether satisfactory child, immediately pounced upon by his grandmother and uncle as the answer to all their prayers.

Reviewing the events

Reviewing these events and putting them together, Mrs. S. came gradually to see that there was a pattern in her life and to understand why it was so hard for her to take or reject, on their merits, her mother's views about Danny. Along with her persistent sense of obligation to her mother went a great deal of resentment and anger. This realization helped her see more clearly why, instead of taking what part of the mother's advice appealed to her as sound, and rejecting what was unsound, she instantly found herself in a state of indiscriminate rebellion. Danny, she realized, had been a kind of gift to her mother to atone for her sense of guilt in having what her brother lacked: intelligence, health, social acceptability. For the same reasons he was a gift to her brother, too.

The drawbacks

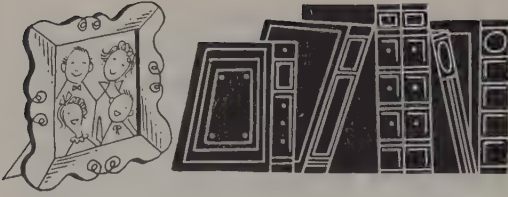
But such an arrangement had the usual drawbacks. Along with her pleasure in having at last given her mother something she wanted, went the need to retaliate because Danny had become so much her mother's possession. She expressed this resentment in sudden wholesale rejection of everything her mother suggested and at the same time felt deep insecurity in her opposition. Actually, Mrs. S. had been a good deal wiser than her mother in the management of Danny's eating—less wise, perhaps, when she dismissed altogether the suggestion that it might be time to give Danny some first steps in toilet training.

As this insecurity, together with its origins and its consequences, was discussed with Mrs. S., she gained increasing confidence in her own decisions. For example, during the first years of their marriage, the S.'s had made their home with Mrs. S.'s mother and brother. At first there appeared to be no other choice. At that time, with her husband in the service, and the budget limited, the reasons for this arrangement seemed good and sufficient. But though the time had long since passed when these reasons held, the two-family set-up had continued. As the talks progressed, she and her husband realized how much they wanted a home of their own. Armed for a strenuous battle with her mother, Mrs. S. was surprised to find it easier than she expected. The move was made.

The full reasons back of Mrs. S.'s initial inability to give Danny the sensible help with toilet training that she gave in other phases of his development, were never explored, nor did such exploration seem necessary when it appeared that the child would respond readily to changes in the mother's approach. The presence in her life of a new "mother figure" in the form of a counselor who fully acknowledged that the child really was Mrs. S.'s, and that she had the capacity for wise decisions about his upbringing, apparently enabled her to overcome her hesitation and take the steps needed to help Danny go forward.

Progress reported

Interviews with Mrs. S. were carried on at weekly intervals over a period of two months, at the end of which time she felt able to go on alone. Three months later she came back to report progress. In spite of contracting a tedious illness, Danny was having no more difficulties in accepting the toilet. Bowel control, which had lagged at first, was now accomplished; bladder control was well on the way, and occasional accidents (though they still upset the grandmother) left the mother unperturbed. Somehow, her relations with her mother were easier too. Mrs. S. also reported joyfully that she was again pregnant. "And this child," she said, "is altogether for me and my husband." She added that she hoped it would be a girl.



Book reviews

The Adolescent.

By Marynia F. Farnham, M.D.

New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951, 243 pp.
\$3.00

Out of her experience as a psychiatrist and the mother of a teen-age daughter, Marynia F. Farnham has written a warm and helpful book about adolescents. It is obvious that she understands young people. She likes and respects them, too—even when she writes about them with humor—but she is well aware of the phenomena of this stage of growth and development which are often so baffling to parents. “This too will pass” is a thought which the author occasionally expresses in one way or another, to the relief of bewildered parents. In addition, she makes many practical suggestions for ways in which parents can help young people grow through these years to mature adulthood.

It is regrettable that in so doing Dr. Farnham establishes so little continuity between adolescence and the years before this stage is reached. Although *The Adolescent* does, at several points, take into account the earlier years, it leaves the impression that adolescence is, as many people feel, an isolated period between childhood and adulthood. It would have been valuable to have here more about what parents might do in the preceding years to ease the strains and tensions of these.

The effect of family relationships during infancy and childhood is shown to some degree through the case material with which Dr. Farnham points up her explanations and advice. But this material is drawn almost wholly from psychiatric case records and is, therefore, largely pathological. While histories of healthy personality development are not so dramatic, most

readers would find the use of more of them refreshing and helpful. On the other hand, it is comforting to find in this book evidence that much of the adolescent behavior that seems so strange is only the normal result of the rapid changes of the teen years.

Although much of this book is reassuring, some of it is quite the reverse. Parents may well become anxious and unsure of themselves after reading certain comments on such topics as adolescent sexual behavior, delinquency and various types of personality disturbance. To be told that “to wait, to hope, to evade, to compromise” when once a boy or girl has given overt expression to delinquent attitudes “is to invite disaster of the most horrifying order” may be a necessary warning. But not only are there a number of such warnings; the suggested counter measures are ones which many parents will find it impossible to follow. Too many communities, as the author herself points out in the final chapter, have no professional facilities for helping such youngsters. What do the parents do then?

Parents will look in vain to *The Adolescent* for help in dealing with the effects on young people of today’s demands and tensions. Although there is passing reference to the anxiety of everyone in these critical days, there is no mention of how the atom bomb, war, mobilization and inflation affect the adolescent’s outlook and actions.

Despite these drawbacks, this book will prove valuable to many parents in helping them toward an understanding of the physical, emotional and social changes of this period in a child’s life. Control, Dr. Farnham points out, is every bit as essential at this stage as at any earlier time; and she reminds her readers that adolescents are reasonable human beings who, despite their protests, welcome control when it is called for. “Love and demand, privilege and responsibility, growing freedom and necessary discipline” are key words to what she has to say.

In the final chapter she draws up a program to help parents and communities meet the needs of young people who, though “reasonably aloof and suspicious . . . are still eager for the help of their elders.”

FRANCES ULLMANN

Our Children and Our Schools.

By Lucy Sprague Mitchell.

New York: Simon and Schuster, 1950. 510 pp.
\$4.00.

Our Children and Our Schools is a book that will interest not only professional school people, but also parents and public-spirited citizens—in fact, anybody who is distressed by the present troubled state of the world and is willing to consider large-scale, long-range methods of improving it.

Lucy Sprague Mitchell, with a rich background of thirty-four years of experimental work with children and teachers, here takes up the frequent challenge that the newer methods of education, which have been used successfully for more than thirty years in the small, private school, cannot be implemented in the large public school. She describes a recent experiment to prove that it can be done.

As chairman of the Bank Street Schools, Mrs. Mitchell, together with members of the Bank Street Workshop staff, went into three New York City public schools—unselected as to neighborhood, pupils, or teachers—and worked there successively over a period of six years. In the first school, where they stayed for three years, they worked with about half the teachers of the school in their classrooms and held weekly meetings with these teachers and their administrators to discuss the work in hand and newer ways with children. Together they planned a curriculum in social studies for the whole school; then they tried it out in the classroom and revised aspects of it.

The details of this experiment take up the major portion of *Our Children and Our Schools*. It would appear that such specialized information might be of value only to the professional person. For the thoughtful reader, however, there is inherent even in the details the sound philosophy behind the curriculum and its psychological implications.

Do we want our children to develop tolerance and respect for those who are different from themselves? Merely memorizing slogans will not do the trick; nor will reading and remembering a few paragraphs from a book. But our hopes may be justified when, for example,

we see third-grade children studying the Manhattan Indians—actually identifying themselves with these people through dramatic play and stories, through trips to museums and to Indian sites where they can reconstruct a way of life, through craft activities such as building an Indian village, making Indian bowls of clay, wampum belts, etc. Projects such as these not only help children to crystallize their ideas about the people, but give the deep satisfaction that results from creative activities.

As the children reach the fifth and sixth years they “begin to see relationships and think in terms of social values.” They are then ready for direct discussions of ideals such as tolerance, democracy, social-mindedness. Yet, in studying faraway nations, no more effective method has been found than for children to put themselves in the place of a particular people—in imagination to work with them, play with them, observe their customs and traditions, try to understand the reasons for their differences.

And throughout these activities the teacher is an unobtrusive guide, leading the children to discover things for themselves, to develop a feeling of self-direction and participation as contributing members of a group. Since the criterion is not “the right answer” to the teacher’s question, each child’s contribution is accepted and respected for what it is worth.

Mrs. Mitchell’s book is valuable to the teacher. Many books have been written explaining the basic philosophy of the new program of education; this one actually shows the relationship of even the minutest classroom activity to the larger ideal behind it.

For the parent, the first part of the book would seem to be of most vital interest; this section explains the nature of the child and his needs, the various levels of maturity, and the general job of the school. But to this reviewer the actual workshop techniques discussed in the second part are of equal importance. The child’s classroom education must necessarily be supplemented at home. We parents must understand not only what our schools are trying to do, but also the particular methods used; only then can there be harmony between the school’s way and the home’s. IDA KLEIN STERNBERG



Parents' questions

These questions are selected and discussed
by the Child Study Association
staff, and the answers written by its various members

My six-months-old baby, Joan, has always had a wonderful appetite. When I tried to feed her cereal, however, she turned her head away after the first taste. I was careful not to urge her; in fact, I dropped it for a few weeks, but even after more than six weeks she is firm in her refusal. I know it's bad to try forcing, but what shall I do? MRS. N.L.

Many babies resist new foods at first, and some stick it out longer than others. It's a big jump from liquid food to solid. If it's the change from bottle to spoon that she seems especially to resist, you might try adding a little cereal to the formula in the bottle, gradually stepping up the proportion of cereal as you increase the size of the hole in the nipple. In that way Joan may become accustomed to the new texture and flavor in this more familiar form.

Have you tried mashed banana or apple sauce? Some children find these more palatable introductions to solids. It doesn't matter which of the foods recommended by your doctor she takes now, or how much. Her formula gives her adequate nourishment. The important thing is that she should gradually learn to like solid foods.

If she continues to resist, you might try propping her into a comfortable sitting position, perhaps on a plastic sheet in her crib (since there's no telling where the food may go) with a bowl of cereal in front of her and leaving her to her own devices. Children who have stubbornly resisted cereal, after messing

in it happily by themselves for a meal or two, may welcome it from then on like an old friend.

My son, Tommy, is six years old. He used to be fairly quick and prompt but now is becoming more and more of a dawdler. Sometimes he fusses only in the mornings; then for weeks at a time he dawdles over everything. What can I do to help him be his old self again? MRS. R.L.O.

A good deal of dawdling is typical of most children of five or six, when they're learning that changes in their daily activities—entering school, for example—require changes in some of their habits, and they begin to face the clock as a limit on their freedom. It is at just such times, when the child is giving up some pleasures, that he needs to get some new satisfactions to justify exchanging old ways for new, the less mature for the more mature behavior. Sharing the task *with* him (helping him get dressed, for example) might be the oil to help the new gears mesh a lot more smoothly—even if you know he really *can* do the job alone. Nagging, of course, will only make him feel he's not getting a fair exchange, that he's getting nothing to balance the freedom he's losing, and may lead him to cancel the whole deal by stubbornness or more severe dawdling. Children of this age shouldn't be expected to act like grown-ups so quickly; they vary greatly in the speed with which they make changes.

Meanwhile, it's more the parents' responsibility to help the child meet life's requirements than it is his to meet them unaided. This might mean waking him a bit earlier or making some decisions for him—about taking a bath, for instance. He'll be glad to be relieved of some of these burdensome responsibilities *sometimes*. Letting Dad take over occasionally might add variety to dull routines. Of course, the feeling behind the methods used by both parents should be consistent, though the details may differ. To be effective, the approach needs to be warm and flexible, and based on understanding and acceptance of what the child is going through.

Sometimes dawdling is very extreme or goes on too long. Then you'll need to study your particular child before deciding what approach is best for him. In doing this, you might ask yourself whether his dawdling is limited to certain times of day or whether it's characteristic of almost everything he does at all times. If the dawdling occurs only when dressing or eating in the morning, before leaving for school, perhaps it's due to distraction by a pet, a radio program, another brother or sister. It may be connected with anxiety about school, which needs special attention. If Tommy dawdles with you but not with his father, differences in handling should be examined. Does he dawdle only when he's preoccupied? This may call for special understanding of what's on his mind. On the other hand, if the behavior is general, a medical condition may exist or the child's normal tempo may be slower than you would like. If Tommy is well, but *normally* moves less rapidly, he can do his best only if you show you accept him as he is.

You may or may not be able to discover why he acts as he does. If you do, he'll still need to *feel* your approval and understanding. However, should you find it very hard to lessen your demands on him, then expert consultation may be needed.

My eleven-year-old daughter has taken to visiting a new-found friend whose parents are certainly not the kind of people I'd like her to

spend time with. They belong to a hard-drinking crowd that runs around a lot, and I think my youngster is really attracted by all the excitement. I hate to forbid her to go, but I don't like the ideals and standards she is exposed to there. MRS. R.J.

At eleven, most children today are quite aware that there are different kinds of people with standards different from those of their parents. They have already been exposed to a wide variety of behavior through movies, radio and television. But your daughter can't have reached her present age without knowing how her own parents feel about manners and morals. It's natural that she should want to explore and venture forth into a different kind of world. To some extent you'll have to count on her good sense, and in what you have built up in her over the years.

But she is probably also a bit confused by the new ideas to which she is exposed and would welcome some help in evaluating them. Have you talked to her about her various friends and their families? Have you discussed with her your own ideas about the right and wrong of various ways of behaving? Even if she seems to reject your point of view, it is likely to carry more weight with her than you think. If your relationship with her has been good, and she has no deep resentments that must find outlets in defying you, these experiences will not be harmful. They may even be valuable, widening her understanding and appreciation of people beyond the home pattern.

Of course, if you suspect that defiance of you is the main motive, then the reasons for

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Honoring Dr. Kilpatrick

A dinner honoring William H. Kilpatrick, one of the nation's great educational leaders, on his eightieth birthday, was held on Saturday, November 17th, at the Hotel Commodore. The Child Study Association, which has for many years enjoyed and benefited from Dr. Kilpatrick's advice and counsel, adds its warm congratulations to the many others tendered on this occasion.

There is no one way

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ples. Very similar ones can be found for the establishment of toilet training and cleanliness in general, for the introduction to solid food, for planning of the menu, for sleeping problems, handling aggressions, etc. All these would help to teach the professional counselor humility in showing him that his knowledge is not sufficient to justify sacrificing the individual to rigid rules. Possibly they also tend to prove that mothers have a right to take themselves seriously, that their own happiness and relaxation is the most important factor in satisfactory child care. I am afraid that we professionals have sinned in this respect in recent years. We have relied too much on the general precepts in books, pamphlets and papers in guiding the emotional needs of the mother.

Although we have forgotten sometimes that the mothers are individuals, it is a fact which we recognize and acknowledge. That the babies are individuals too, is often ignored. It is the great merit of the papers of Margaret Fries, of Sybille Escalona and of Mary Leitch that they have drawn our attention to this point.

Infants invite generalization. If one enters a hospital nursery rooming ten to twenty babies one easily gets the impression that they are all alike. They are all tiny and delicate, they are all lying in their cribs, they all sleep a lot and they all cry too much. According to one's disposition, one may add that they all have dainty and elegant hands and feet, or that they all smell badly.

Beware of generalizations

Our intensive study of a limited number of babies at the Child Study Center, Yale University, has shown us, beyond any doubt, how questionable generalizations about infants are. Instead of a systematic exposition of this thesis we shall again proceed by examples to show that even some of the most widely accepted statements about babies should be revised.

"If a baby cries, pick it up." How many of us have uttered this sentence with conviction? The slight hesitation in our voices was certainly not due to any doubt of the infallibility of the

statement, but only to the thought that a constant picking up night and day might be too much for the mother. If we ever had doubts, little Barbara would have convinced us in our opinion. Picking up worked like a miracle whenever she was upset. Even pangs of hunger seemed to stop troubling her if she was on her mother's arm. However, Harry's mother was not rewarded by her son's quieting down when she took him out of his crib. Maybe she was clumsy? We found out, however, that whoever picked up Harry provoked an uncontrollable yelling spell. Harry just did not like any change of position. He did not like any change at all.

"If you cannot satisfy an apparent need, like hunger, divert the baby. It is easy to divert a young child." As a rule this is true. If Margaret heard the soft voice of her mother she easily could wait for her next meal. Little Marc, however, refused definitely to be fooled by promises. "Meal or nothing!" he declared by his intense crying. That Marc's specificity of wishes was not only due to some characteristics of his gastro-intestinal tract was clearly seen by the impossibility of diverting him from other disagreeable sensations. His mother told us that he disliked to be undressed, that he disliked wet diapers, or any draft. Two objective observers verified the fact that Marc became unhappy under any of these conditions. Whereas his distress stopped if the window were closed, he were dressed, or the diapers were changed, no feeding him, no rocking, no speaking to him would do the trick.

"Natura non facit saltum." "Nature does not jump,"—development is a gradual process. Tommy's sucking history shows this clearly. During his first day his hand could not find his mouth at all. On the second day, one hand regularly approached the head, on the third day it rested on the cheek, on the fourth day it had found the mouth. But even nature is inconsistent sometimes. Mary seemed to have made no progress at all during her first four days. The way of her hand to her mouth was undiscovered, a new territory. How long would Mary be deprived of the pleasure of thumb-sucking? Not too long. On the fifth day Mary was sucking her thumb and she did it as expertly as Tommy did it with all his practice.

"Infants are consistent beings. If you watch how active they are when stimulated pleasantly or unpleasantly, you can guess how active they are altogether." Again you can find children who verify this point of view. These children may react with a violent start to noise, a strong reaction to the withdrawal of the nipple, and may be active in their movements when left alone. However, Charles, who exhausted any of our observers by the vigor and variety of his spontaneous movements, produced hardly any startle at all. He occasionally reacted when the nipple was withdrawn, he occasionally did not. Ann was so sensitive that any noise made her start all over. Yet she was the best "waiter" for food we had in the group we observed. Her spontaneous motor activity was moderate at best.

Imagination's role

"What you see in a child depends on you; the more imagination you have, or the more you project onto a baby, the more varied and colorful his picture will be." In our observational procedure, which should be as objective and as impersonal as possible, we give the observers at one point the opportunity to record their subjective impressions. Before the detailed observation starts, the observer is asked to write down everything that crosses his mind in looking at the baby. We use a number of observers, who do not read each other's records until the observational series is terminated. In Johnny's case, all our observers seem to have been completely lacking in imagination. They described him as "sturdy" or "not too pretty," or they did not describe him at all. Only one observer, who knew that her observation took place just after circumcision, added "poor little man" to her report. There was no observer on the other hand who did not comment what a "dainty little lady" Lillian was, that one felt an "intruder" in observing her, that the "little girl condescended" to being looked at, but felt rather shocked "when undressed for this purpose." The observers were unanimous that Christopher was "a travelling salesman," a "man-child" a "definite character" if not altogether a pleasant one. And they felt disappointed when seeing Steve after him, saying

that he appeared "pale" and "indefinite" compared with Christopher. It would seem that a mother who finds her child's face and personality uniquely interesting may not be altogether wrong.

It is obvious that recognition of differences in babies requires a new trend in child care. All these variations make us aware that we have to stop and look before judging and counseling, and that we must be much more flexible and resourceful in meeting different needs. They teach us that our eyes and ears, our feeling of touch and temperature are as valuable guides in helping mothers as our abstracting minds and our knowledge of text books. They teach us that we should pay more respect to the observations of those people who have the greatest opportunity to see and observe the baby, namely the parents. And they teach us above all that even the world events of recent years have not warned us enough against premature generalizations. We have not realized sufficiently how dangerous it has been to apply the word "all" to nations and ethnical groups. We still apply it freely to children. In fact, perhaps humanity could make better progress if this word "all" were banned for some time from our vocabulary.

For Parents of the Pre-School Child

Child Study Association offers a packet of reprints and pamphlets chosen especially to help you in the early and very important years of your child's life.

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Happiness and mastery

Continued from page 8

she recalls that Marian herself never makes such issues elsewhere. When she visits Sue overnight, she is a delightful and a well behaved guest.

Is this a "normal" process of growing up or is this a question of mother-daughter relationship? It may be either. It may well be Marian's method of exploring personal relationships and her ability to make herself feel masterful. The only vehicles for exploration are the daily situations in which there is a close parent-child relationship. Where else is a four-year-old little girl to try her talents at molding the behavior of another human being? Out of her mother's response, the final resolution may be constructive or exploitative. At present she may be hard to live with from time to time, but her behavior, though difficult, is that of a normal child.

A management problem

Peter is five and a half. He is old enough to go to first grade and is doing nicely in school. His father wonders if he is not also old enough to hear what is said to him at home. Mother has given up wondering. He can come to dinner with his jacket on, although asked to hang it up in a loud clear voice several times. Then in the midst of dinner, he will suddenly make startling announcements indicating a trend of thought having nothing to do with the conversation: "Now I know why fish swim so good. They practice all the time. If people practiced every day they could swim as good as fish! Right?" Peter tends to dawdle, but he doesn't seem to be trying to avoid anything really. He may just be thinking of important things, like his bottle tops or how to spell "Oh, oh, oh." Peter is not really a behavior problem. It is undeniable, however, that he frequently presents a problem of management. The distinction is that his dawdling, his lack of attention, are due to the fact of being engrossed in mastery of his five-and-a-half-year old understanding of the world and his place in it. If his behavior indicated avoidance of activity and relationships, the problem would

be entitled to graver concern. There may be times when it is important to make an issue with the child for faster activity regardless of your understanding that he is not doing anything "bad" by his delay. The general aim should be to give the child a feeling that he is part of a family rather than a pivotal point for all activity.

Results are important

Larry is a six-and-a-half-year old. He is quite a competent child, yet each new situation causes him to go into a tailspin. He is experienced in school attendance, having spent two years in nursery school, one in kindergarten and one in first grade. He has always liked his teacher and has always been liked by her. Yet he burst into tears at the door of his classroom on the first day of the new year. A first visit to a home usually occasions some negative remark, as, "This is a stinky house." Starting a woodworking class at his own request, he sulks away half of the first session. When he joins a new group of children, he hovers on the periphery for a long while before moving to join a game. Larry's parents have learned not to be too concerned over the boy's behavior, however. They have noticed that although he seems to approach things walking in backwards, so to speak, he always masters them in the end. He enters his classroom and enjoys school so much that he regrets holidays. Given time, he begins to feel at home and express himself more positively in the strange house. He becomes an active part of the woodworking class, joins the children at their play. Larry is oriented toward mastery. His approach is cautious, on the surface he appears unassertive and timid. In the end, however, his activity is well rounded and successful. He is not a behavior problem.

The sense of accomplishment

These few illustrations of some of the common types of "problem" behavior in the early post-infancy years, are designed to illustrate the concept of mastery as a focus, rather than happiness. True happiness and satisfaction arise out of a sense of accomplishment. A true sense of personal value is present when the individual

knows that the possibility of success is there and is willing to risk a failure. The style in which the attempt at mastery is made will be consistent with the child's personality and can only be judged in these terms. Variations in children's approaches are not only to be expected, but are, of course, desirable. To master the new experiences of growth, to produce the rich and varied culture in which human beings can attain their maximum growth, it literally takes all kinds!

Outward bound

Continued from page 11

organized community often denies them. That too-well-understood boy of twelve is giving us evidence that he is straining toward his next steps in growth.

Yet with all this moving away from home, the child is always deeply aware of his own family and has a right and a need to remain within it, comfortably and wholeheartedly. This holds true of his school and his classroom, if less forcefully. Teacher and parent both need to be able to accept his seeming rejection and yet keep his place for him in the group. Even when he seems to reject his peers, as well as the grown-ups, the road back must be kept open. The quiet sulker and the bat-flinging tornado both need sympathetic help from the adults to tide them over the embarrassment and guilt which their behavior brings them. Judgment, either by his peers or his elders, does not meet his needs. Labelling him "bad" or "difficult" or a "problem child" produces little that is constructive. Nevertheless, the child does need to face the consequence of his unsocial behavior: a stylized "I'm sorry" may not be enough. He needs to be told quite clearly *why* the behavior is undesirable—in what ways it may have been dangerous or destructive both for himself and other people. There is no purpose in moralistic punishment. There is a good deal of purpose in dealing functionally with consequences, so that we are not judging the child, but helping him to handle his behavior.

We think of meeting the child's needs at the

place in growth where he is, his readiness to receive and use experience. Thus we realize we do not really teach responsibility by setting tasks for children. Nor is the child best prepared to stand on his own by early lessons in independence. Paradoxical as it may seem, the child who has had full measure of satisfying dependent relationships, at the appropriate time, who has felt the warmth of being nurtured and cherished, becomes the independent adult who, in his turn, can be a giving person.

Drill in ways of living does not produce much better results than old fashioned drills in multiplication tables. It is a truism that we learn by experience. John Dewey has pointed out that we have no way of *teaching* moral principles. We can only give children experiences in morality. We expect honesty and integrity from our children, for instance, but how often is dinner-table conversation enlivened by references to income tax evasion or ticket fixing? Such incidents are more likely to be reflected in our children's behavior than any rule or precept we lay down.

What, then, do we have to guide us? If we think of childhood as having its own values, not merely as a preparation for adult living; if we think of education, at home or at school, as those experiences which help the child happily and zestfully to get the best out of that era in his life, we are more likely to develop healthy personalities growing toward sound function within themselves, in their families and in their world.

Infant Care

Since the first appearance of *Infant Care*, in 1914, this booklet on the baby's first year has been so popular that its publishers, U. S. Children's Bureau, Federal Security Agency, has become accustomed to orders simply requesting "the book." Twenty-eight million copies have been distributed over the years; and it has been translated into eight languages. The new edition, published this fall, reflects the major changes that have taken place in the philosophy of child care, as well as advances in medicine and psychiatry, and is the result of consultation with doctors, nurses, social workers, psychiatrists, nutritionists, parent educators—and parents. The cost of this pamphlet is 20 cents per copy.

Adolescent phase

Continued from page 14

The police department in many cities and the welfare organizations are frequently glad to have the opportunity of meeting with the staff of the school to discuss neighborhood problems.

If, and when, the social and economic status of teachers in America improves, teachers will be drawn from a wider variety of backgrounds and this will tend to develop curricula, attitudes, and programs that are more inclusive and better adapted to wide variations. Teachers will travel more; the extended use of field trips and "exchange" experiences will make a contribution.

Parents, for their part, especially those who live in the social *mélange* of our great cities, can no longer ignore the side streets. Their children won't. Parents must try to extend equal hospitality and graciousness to the wide variety of neighborhood companionships that their children will develop—and will find their own lives greatly enriched in the process.

Adults have egos, too!

There is, in addition, one other handicap that we must guard against. Adolescents, far more than children, represent a threat to parents and teachers. As Dr. Kenneth Clark, co-founder and associate director of the Northside Center for Child Development in New York City says, "The youth has gained an increasing reliance in viewing his parents and teachers; the uncritical glow and evaluation which he gave them as a child, begin to dim with adolescence. The adult who resents, denies, or feels threatened by this growing youthful keenness, will be sure to lose stature in the eyes of the adolescent."

Adults who meet this growing "equality" on the part of youth with ease, understanding, and respect are earning new admiration from young people. The relationship will change, must change, and should change, but there is no reason why it should deteriorate.

Adults, who are attempting to help young people face their problems and who resent the "impertinences," challenges, and argumentative abilities of youth are probably forgetting their

own behavior under similar conditions! Furthermore, the grown-up who attempts to put an abrupt quietus to situations by throwing his weight around, serves only to increase, never to solve the problem. On the other hand, the adult whose understanding of life and whose inner security enables him to accept, even welcome, the growing status and abilities of young people, has found the finest means for enabling adult and adolescent to meet problems together. Though confused and sometimes uninformed, young people, *are* keen and amazingly competent.

With this rapport established, adults are in a position to help young people, to clarify their problems, find the needed information, suggest courses of action. Programs planned under such conditions have reality for young people because they played an important role in planning them.

Changing ways and current confusions

Developing easy, natural, and consistent relations with young people is very difficult for many adults, because the social roles of young and old have changed, and are changing, so rapidly. The counseling adult finds himself forced to play many roles with young people. Sometimes he serves only as a wailing wall for youthful woes; again he may simply enact the character of non-directive comrade; in swift succession he may become adviser, commanding first sergeant, or master planner. Such virtuosity can only be accomplished if the adult feels very secure about his role and responsibilities. This is more difficult today than some decades ago.

Not too long ago, adults exercised complete authority over young people. Like the gods of the Old Testament, adults were to be feared, worshipped, and loved. While the formula was clearly faulty in many respects, it was generally accepted by both young and old because it was the only one that they knew. Because of this acceptance, young and old felt a sense of security; they understood their respective roles. Today we are highly sceptical of the value of corporal punishment. Yet the spanking in the attic, administered by the loving parent doing his duty according to the lights of the day, represented at least a simple and unconfused relationship. The child was pained largely in the posterior, not in the ego, because he accepted

the right of the parent to punish him; the parent was pained in palm, but recognized his responsibility and the justice of his duty.

Middle-aged parents and teachers of today in many cases were brought up under this system. They may be the unhappy products of past patterns and at the same time the confused recipients of new philosophies. They have read lightly and widely in the social sciences. They have taken courses at the universities, heard the popular lectures, been pressed to accept and apply new ideas. Out of this cornucopian abundance of information and exhortation, the average parent or teacher is able to understand a relatively small part, and act upon even less.

Science and psychology are remaking the world and reshaping human destinies. Their achievements have been remarkable and their goals are splendid, but this sudden feast of wisdom has produced a diet a little too rich for easy consumption. Naturally enough, many of us have confused the *hors d'oeuvres* with the *pièce de résistance*: we are inclined to accent the details and lose sight of the major patterns.

Mutual respect is not "equality"

For example, the superficial student of child development is inclined to confuse equality of

ego and personal integrity with equality of experience and responsibility. Parents and teachers who may have suffered painful authoritarian childhoods and who have misread the findings of modern psychology are inclined to treat children as "equals" in a quite unnatural sense. The same adults would recognize that there is no question of equality between the inexperienced interne and the widely respected medical specialist. Parents' attempts to equate youth and maturity in the sense of responsibility always fail in the face of reality. Adults who are trying to clutch this unrealistic philosophy, and still safeguard their children and meet the daily situations of living, too often find themselves reduced to the whining tone, the badgering suggestions, the inconsistent variations between angry command and meek suppliance. In like manner, the adult who has had several decades of experience as a social being and who expects the child to have the same balance and good sense, will be more apt to find, to his complete confusion, that he is dealing with delightful, destructive, lovable little primitives. The ambivalent adult finds himself with one hand holding the latest book on child development and the other hand itching to administer a swift

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Annual Conference of the Child Study Association

Parents in search of self confidence

The Annual Conference of the Child Study Association will be held on Monday, March 3, 1952, at the Hotel Statler, in New York City. The staff of the Child Study Association has for some time been concerned with the many points of view on parent-child relationships to which parents have been exposed. We have always believed that as parents we have a right to be the kind of people we are and to act with our children in the way that is most suitable and comfortable as people. For this reason we have decided to devote the Annual Conference this year to a clarification of some of the outer and inner pressures that frequently create obstacles for parents.

There will be three sessions: 9:30 A.M.; luncheon at 12:30 P.M.; and 3:30 P.M. Among the guest speakers will be Dr. Peter B. Neubauer, Director, Council Child Development Center; Dr. Ira Reid, Professor of Sociology, Haverford College; Mrs. Elizabeth Healy Ross, Fact Finding Staff, White House Conference, Federal Security Agency; Dr. F. C. Redlick, Yale University School of Medicine; and Dr. Arthur L. Swift, Jr., Professor of Church and Community, Union Theological Seminary.

Advance reservations must be made for all sessions. Please write to the Child Study Association for registration blanks.

spank. Such a divided role can produce only an increased confusion and a relationship going from bad to worse.

Equality like this has neither sense nor sincerity. Equality, on the other hand, of human dignity and personal integrity is the inalienable right of young and old. Mutual respect, in this sense, is essential and does not have to be confusing at all. There is no difficulty if we respect young people as human beings and as *young* people. Our confusion arises from our attempts to respect young people as old people! To underestimate the growing needs and capacities of youth is a major error of counseling; it results in youthful hostility and the impossibility of rapport. To equate youth and maturity, we repeat, is completely unrealistic and robs the adult of his ability to serve as an experienced guide. The mature counselor is equipped with greater experience, ability, and information. It is his *obligation* to employ these qualities in his day-to-day dealings with young people.

Small mistakes aren't fatal

It is high time for the over-anxious and tense grown-up to relax in his role. He is far better equipped than his predecessors to be helpful to young people. He must not be too concerned with his small mistakes and failures. It is the long-range relationships with young people which are important. If he has achieved a broad understanding based on study and observation, his small acts will tend to be consistent, helpful, and purposeful. They will be sincerely given and easily received. Like the singer who has mastered the words and the tune, he is now free to give his own interpretation and spontaneous enthusiasm to the music. The adult who understands his society, his own and the adolescent's role in that society, who sincerely respects young people and understands their growing skills and problems, need no longer act like an anxious automaton, fearful that his small single acts are in violation of scientific principles and moral codes. Understanding and accepting his cultural and personal handicaps, he can move with skill and friendly purpose as a responsible adult facing a rewarding and demanding task.

Parents' questions

Continued from page 21

this will need careful consideration. Forbidding her to have the friends she wants will, in that case, only increase her antagonism. Another thing: be sure she knows she can bring any of her friends to her own home without subjecting them to scrutiny and criticism. Make your home as inviting to the young people as you can—a hospitable ice-box, reasonable privacy and the fewest possible "musts" and "don't's."

My son and daughter—nineteen and seventeen—are at the age where they have decided views on every conceivable matter—not only about dating and petting, but about how parents should bring up their children, about religion, politics, marriage and matters which are really still beyond them. I suppose it's all natural, and my husband and I try not to intrude. We've had it dinned into us that young people must be left free to grow up in their own way. Yet, as we listen, they seem so callow and they're so opinionated that we have to bite our tongues to keep from contradicting them. What is the right approach? MRS. T.S.M.

Leaving young people "free to grow up in their own way" certainly doesn't mean that parents have no further part to play in their lives. Young and old have much to give each other even when they disagree. But it's especially up to the parents to keep disagreements from getting bitter. To achieve this you'll need real respect for attempts of the young to grapple with large problems. If you can do this successfully, your point of view, far from being useless, will be a necessary element in your children's development. Why should you keep silent?

Perhaps there's a clue to your difficulty in your use of the word "contradict." Discussion, not contradiction, is what's called for. It's true that finally the younger generation will form their own judgements, that these may differ from yours, and that you will have to accept

it that way. But this doesn't mean that they shouldn't be exposed to your thinking. This, of course, puts it up to you to give them not just another set of opinions but a clear idea of how you've arrived at your views in spite of doubts and in spite of many qualifications.

Politics, religion, marriage and all the rest are actually quite properly the concern of youth. In the very near future they must make decisions about all of these things. They need your help. They need to hear not only what you believe, but more important, bits from your experience of life in general. As a mature person you can help them see how complicated these matters are. Young people characteristically tackle problems eagerly from their ample store of energy, curiosity, adventurousness and self-confidence. These are fine things, but so are experience, knowledge of life and tolerance for human weaknesses which—let us hope—are attributes of maturity. Why withhold these from young people?

The answer perhaps lies in cultivating the art of conversation as part of your family life—conversation that isn't argumentation to "prove" one side right, the other wrong, but is a true interchange of information for the enlightenment of all concerned.

So don't bite your tongue any longer. Keep communications between you and your children wide open. Take part in their discussions not as one who would set callow youth on the right path, but as a fellow thinker who, for all his doubts, yet has some convictions too. This isn't domination, but education—the kind of education from which both parents and children stand to gain.

Midcentury committee meets

The National Midcentury Committee for Children and Youth held its first meeting at the Shoreland Hotel in Chicago on October 29th and 30th to adopt a program for carrying on the work of the White House Conference. The Advisory Council on State and Local Action also met at that time, and the announcement of this latter meeting asked that each state committee designate two voting representatives and two observers. It was suggested that at least one of the four be a young person.

Publications of the Midcentury White House Conference now available include:

The Official Conference Proceedings, in cloth or paper editions;

Fact Finding Report: a digest;

A Chart Book of basic data on the Nation's children and young people. Statistical material prepared for the Conference;

The Conference Platform, containing recommendations adopted in the final Plenary session and the Conference Pledge to Children;

and *The Pledge To Children*, a scroll.

All the foregoing are published and distributed by Health Publications Institute, Inc., Raleigh, North Carolina.

World assembly of youth

A meeting last fall of the World Assembly of Youth at Cornell University was attended by five hundred and fifty delegates from sixty-five countries who called for acceleration of programs designed to achieve Human Rights for all peoples. It was decided at this meeting to sponsor a WAY Technical Assistance project for community development through youth organizations. Said one of the forty-four American youth leaders present: "I realized for the first time that the white people of the world are the minority. When we discriminate, we are setting ourselves apart from the majority of our fellow men."

The Young Adult Council of the National Social Welfare Assembly, American affiliate of WAY, organized educational tours for the visitors.



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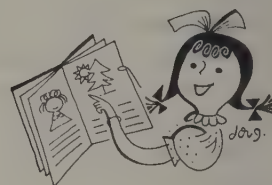




Books of the year for children

Selected by the Children's Book Committee of the Child Study Association

These titles have been selected from the children's books published during the calendar year 1951. For convenience they have been arranged in age groupings, but many have a far wider appeal than could be indicated. Books of outstanding quality are starred (). Titles designated (#) are books which illuminate today's world for children.*



Collections

***READ ME MORE STORIES.** Compiled by the Child Study Association. Illus. by Barbara Cooney. Crowell. \$2.00. Another in this well-loved series of read-aloud books offering under one cover many inviting modern stories and poems just right for the very youngest listener. The pictures are sheer enchantment. (3-6)

DOGS, DOGS, DOGS.

PIRATES, PIRATES, PIRATES. Selected by Phyllis R. Fenner. Illus. by Manning deV. Lee. Watts. \$2.75 each. This gifted anthologist has again brought together excellent selections, one for the dog lover, the other about heroes and villains sailing under the Jolly Roger. (11-14)

THE EDGE OF DANGER: True Stories of Adventure. Collected by Margaret C. Scoggin. Knopf. \$3.00. Spine-tingling tales of men who met extraordinary dangers and won their way to safety. (12 and over)

POEMS FOR RED LETTER DAYS. Compiled by Elizabeth Hough Sechrist. Macrae. \$3.50. Excellent full collection of old and new verse for the holidays of the year. (10 and over)

For the youngest: under five

***ALL FALLING DOWN.** By Gene Zion. Illus. by Margaret Bloy Graham. Harpers. \$1.75. Exquisite pictures and cadenced text convey the warmth and security of the child's own little world.

***THE FAMILY MOTHER GOOSE.** Illus. by Leonard Weisgard. Harpers. \$1.25. Welcome rearrangement into three appealing little volumes (boxed) grouped under the titles of Mother, Father, and Little Goose.

***PAPA SMALL.** Written and illus. by Lois Lenski. Oxford. \$1.25. Another in this happy series of the Small family's simple daily doings, with perfect synthesis of text with pictures.

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Ages five, six, and seven

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